

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. Walter Harinck

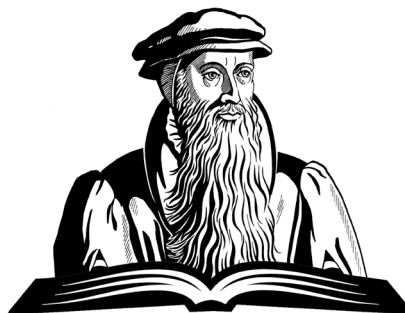
STUDY GUIDE

Module 6:

ECCLESIOLOGY— THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Lecture 2:

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE CHURCH?



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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STUDY GUIDE

Module 6

Ecclesiology—the Doctrine of the Church

1. Introduction to Ecclesiology
- 2. What Does the Bible Say About the Church?**
3. The Nature of the Church
4. The Authority of the Church
5. The Government of the Church
6. Church Offices
7. Church Discipline
8. The Worship of the Church and the Means of Grace
9. The Sacrament of Christian Baptism
10. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

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Module 6:

Ecclesiology—The Doctrine of the Church

Lecture 2:

What Does the Bible Say About the Church?

Introduction

Correct data gives the necessary input for decision making. Without the correct information, the picture that we have of the situation will be mistaken. You will agree that this will have serious consequences. Ecclesiology is the study of the Christian Church, as we find it in the Bible. The data from Scripture is the input for this systematic study. Without the inspired Word of God as our main and most important source, we will have misconceptions about the Church.

Theme: *Tracing the historic lines of the Church.*

I. The Old Testament Development of the Church

1. The Church of the seed, right from the beginning, established by God.
 - a. The covenant of grace—Genesis 3:15.
 - b. Adam and Eve, the first members.
 - c. From the beginning, two lines: the generation of Cain, and of Seth.
 - d. The Church of Noah's time—eight saved.
2. The Church of Abraham's tent—Genesis 17:7.
 - a. The sign and seal of the covenant: the sacrament of circumcision.
 - b. Different dispensations of the covenant of grace.
 - 1) Families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - 2) Temporal blessings, and spiritual blessings.

3. The Church of the tabernacle and the temple.
 - a. The Mosaic period, God gave them the tabernacle.
 - 1) Ceremonial law with priests and sacrifices showed the gospel of redemption.
 - 2) the sacrament of passover showed remission by the shedding of blood.
 - b. In the promised land, Israel was a state church, with the temple as the religious center.
 - 1) Foreigners could join the Church only by joining the nation.
 - c. The prophets told of a day when God's Church will be among the nations.
4. Summary.

Questions:

1. How do we know that the Bible speaks about the Church of God from the beginning? In what passage do we find God's first promise to build his Church through the seed of the woman? What is "the church of the seed"?

2. What implications are there for us that Adam and Eve were the first members of the Church?

3. What are the two generational lines seen from the beginning? In which of these two lines is the lineage of the true Church?

4. How do we see a symbol of the Church in Noah's ark and the flood? How is this evidenced in the Scriptures of the New Testament? Which Reformation era confession of faith states this, as quoted in this lecture?

5. What was the covenant that God made with Abraham at the beginning of the patriarchal period? Was it new? What sacramental sign and seal did God give to him to be kept by all his seed?

6. What is the meaning of the tabernacle and the ceremonial law that God gave to the Church through Moses? How was the gospel message seen in it? What did the offerings point to? What did the sacrament of passover point to?

7. How do we understand Israel as a nation state in the Old Testament? How was the gospel promised to all nations of the world?

8. In your own words, summarize the picture of the Church as seen in the Old Testament.

II. Terms for the Church in the Bible

1. In the Old Testament.

- a. “*Qahal*” means “assembly,” from a Hebrew word meaning “to call together.”
- b. “*Eda*” means “congregation,” from a root word that means “to meet by appointment.”

2. “*Synagogue*” is a Greek word that means “congregation,” for the building where they met for prayer and meditation, began to be used after the period of the Babylonian exile.

3. In the New Testament.

a. “*Kuriake*” is a secular Greek word that means “belonging to the Lord.”

1) The English word *church* and the Dutch word *kerk* are derived from *kuriake*.

b. “*Ecclesia*” is a Greek word for “gathering of citizens in a public place.” In Scripture it most often means “gathering of those who are disciples of Christ.”

1) Refers both to the actual meetings, and also to the people of God assembled.

Questions

1. What does the Old Testament Hebrew word “*qahal*” mean? How is this word used in describing the Church in the Old Testament?

2. What’s the meaning of the Old Testament Hebrew word “*eda*”? How was it used in connection with the tabernacle of Moses?

3. What does the Greek word “*synagogue*” refer to? When did it begin to be used?

4. What is meaning of the Greek word “*kuriake*” and how has it been used in the New Testament? How did the early Christians use it in relation to the Church?

5. Define the Greek word “*ecclesia*” as it is used in the New Testament? What are the implications of this word being used in the plural form?

6. Please explain how the word “*ecclesia*” is a qualitative concept, and not quantitative.

III. The Church in the New Testament

1. The contours of the New Testament Church begin to appear in the Gospels.
2. The Church is exemplified in the book of Acts.
 - a. Before Pentecost, the church already existed in Jerusalem.
 - b. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on their gathering.
 - c. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine—Acts 2:42.
 - d. The church was grounded in the work and teaching of Jesus Christ.
 - e. The gospel went forth from Jerusalem to Rome, despite persecution—Acts 12:24; and 19:20.
3. The Church is further explained in the epistles.
 - a. Letters are aimed at building up the churches—Ephesians 2:21; 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2.
 - b. The Lord makes use of men for building his Church.
 - c. Spiritual gifts, charisma, and the offices in the church are gifts to the Church.
4. A rich variety of terms describing the New Testament Church in the epistles:
 - a. The temple of God—1 Corinthians 3:16.
 - b. Holy temple in the Lord—Ephesians 2:21.
 - c. The body of Christ—Ephesians 1:22–23 and Colossians 1:18.
 - d. The kingdom of his dear Son—Colossians 1:13.
 - e. The house of God—Hebrews 10:21 and 1 Peter 4:17.
 - f. City of the living God, and, The heavenly Jerusalem—Hebrews 12:22.

g. “Jerusalem”—Galatians 4:26 and Revelation 21:10.

h. The bride, the Lamb’s wife—Revelation 21:9.

i. The branches—Romans 11:17.

Questions:

1. How much about the New Testament Church was revealed in the Gospels?

2. List the main chronological points of the development of the New Testament Church as seen in the book of Acts.

3. What are the main teachings about the Church in the epistles?

4. What are the various phrases used in the epistles to describe the New Testament Church?

IV. Conclusion

1. The Church originates from God.

2. The Church was gathered first from among the people of Israel, and after that, from the people of Israel and all the nations.

3. The Church of the New Testament is closely related to the kingdom of God that did come and still has to come.
4. The Church carries different names to teach us that she is the work of the Triune God.
5. The Church is governed by Christ through his Spirit and through God's Word.
6. Communion with Christ is a communion through the Holy Spirit, and from it flows the communion of the saints—members of the Church.
7. The Church is served by officers ordained by God, and called to serve God. The Church is called to live as a holy people, to gain others for his service.

Questions:

1. Some claim that Jesus did not use the word “ecclesia” in Matthew 16:18. How does the kingdom of God relate to the Church of God?

2. How does the Church carrying so many different names teach us that she is the work of the Triune God?

3. How does the Lord Jesus Christ govern his Church? How do we see communion with Christ manifested in the Church?

V. Self-Reflection

Do you see how the perseverance of the Church is a miracle of God? Think of how the Church has been attacked and threatened throughout all of history, but God fulfills his promises till the end. The faithful Christian Church is often abased in the world, but she is highly esteemed in the eyes of God. What is the identity of the Church? How does that apply to you as a member of Christ's Church?
